

A SINGLE, RIGOROUS CURRICULUM FOR ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

**P-16 Council
Agenda Item D-2
December 11, 2001**

Discussion

At its September meeting, the P-16 Council endorsed the concept of a single, rigorous curriculum as requisite for high school graduation and asked the staffs of the Kentucky Department of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education to work toward the achievement of this goal.

To begin this work, Kentucky applied to participate in *The American Diploma Project* and was one of five states to be selected; Texas, Indiana, Massachusetts, and Nevada are the other four. The project's goal is to develop a model American high school curriculum. Four national organizations—Achieve, Inc., The Education Trust, The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, and the National Alliance of Business—are sponsoring the project. We will work within Kentucky and with representatives from the other states to define rigorous standards for high school graduation that prepare students for college work or high performance jobs. The initial planning meeting was November 7 and included participants Ed Ford (representing the governor's office); Carol Gabbard (chair of the P-16 council); Joanne Lang (representing the Kentucky Science and Technology Council); Andy Downs (representing both the Chamber of Commerce and the Partnership for Kentucky Schools); Bob Sexton (representing the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence); and Stephanie Johnson Webb (representing the Office of the New Economy).

The goals of the project are to increase support for standard-based reform by strengthening the demand for it from postsecondary institutions and employers and to develop a new set of benchmarks in English, mathematics, and science that all students can use. Representatives from the governor's office, the KDE, the CPE, and business leadership met in Washington, D.C., at the end of November to establish state needs and timetables.

Achieve, Inc., is collecting assessment tools, including the CATS, SAT, ACT, COMPASS (the ACT placement device used by the Kentucky Community and Technical College System), GED, workplace assessments, and sample placement tests for English and mathematics used by Kentucky's postsecondary institutions. K-12 teacher representatives and faculty representatives of the two- and four-year institutions from all five participating states will gather in Austin, Texas, in early January to outline the gaps that exist between high school assessments and postsecondary placement tests and how to close that assessment gap. Achieve, Inc., will conduct a workplace study to determine areas where economic growth is likely and to identify skills that will be needed in these growth fields. By May 2002 states will be asked to identify which standard based high school assessment data would be considered for use by postsecondary institutions for admissions and placement purposes and by employers for hiring purposes.